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SUBJECT: (C) BELIZE: PM MUSA ON GUATEMALA-VENEZUELA UNSC
BIDS; KEEN TO MAKE PROGRESS ON TIP RANKING

REF: A. BELIZE 243

- [1](#)B. BELIZE 459
- [1](#)C. STATE 85511
- [1](#)D. BELIZE 561

Classified By: Ambassador Dieter for reason 1.4(b) (d)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) Belize appreciates U.S. assurances that its recent TIP Tier 3 ranking is not linked to its unwillingness to support Guatemala's candidacy for a seat on the UNSC, and will make a concerted effort to implement the 60-day mini-plan, according to Prime Minister (PM) Said Musa. Guatemala should show good faith in resolving its longstanding border dispute with Belize by moving forward with resettlement of the inhabitants of Santa Rosa; this would allow more CARICOM members to support its bid for a seat on the UNSC. End Summary.

Dispelling Allegations of Linkage

[1](#)2. (C) Amb. Dieter met privately with Prime Minister (PM) Said Musa and Foreign Minister Eamon Courtenay the morning of June 21 to emphasize the following points:

(A) The U.S. was concerned by recent media reports indicating that the Government of Belize (GoB) believed that its recent ranking by the USG on Tier 3 with respect to trafficking-in-persons (TIP) (Reftel C) "was not a coincidence" but had been in part a result of the GoB's opposition to Guatemala, and support for Venezuela, to become a member of the UNSC (Reftels A, B).

(B) In fact, within the Department, G/TIP was a largely autonomous, one-issue office which evaluates countries' TIP performances irrespective of any other issues or policies. There was no connection or linkage between Belize's Tier 3 ranking and the GoB's position on Guatemala's or Venezuela's candidacy for a UNSC seat.

(C) We realized that the GoB was aware of the negative implications for Belize if it were to remain on Tier 3 and become subject to sanctions, particularly with respect to freezing IMET and FMF. This was an outcome

we all hoped to avoid.

(D) The focus now should be on implementation of the 60-day mini-plan, with the objective of having Belize removed from Tier 3. The Embassy would assist and support in any way it could, but the GoB would need to take the initiative to move the effort forward. The U.S. recognized that the GoB's resources were stretched thin. However we hoped that, in implementing the mini-plan, the GoB would move ahead and give timely responses.

(E) The U.S. hoped that, through implementation of the mini-plan, the GoB and USG could "put things back on an even keel". But in any case, that the Tier 3 ranking had come during the run-up to the UNSC membership vote had been purely coincidental: there was no linkage between the two.

Belize Committed to Progress on TIP

13. (C) PM Musa then made the following points:

(A) He welcomed the opportunity to meet, and appreciated the assurance that Belize's Tier 3 ranking had been unrelated to the GoB's position with respect to the Guatemala-Venezuela competition for a UNSC seat.

(B) His Government took the Tier 3 ranking very seriously: it had been the subject of a "full-blown" discussion in the most recent cabinet meeting. His Government intended to pursue counter-TIP efforts "every way possible." The GoB accepted that there was a TIP problem, and would do "whatever we can" to remedy matters.

(C) As a first step, cabinet had agreed to designate the Chief Executive Officer in the Ministry of Human Development, Ms. Anita Zetina, to head the TIP Task Force; Community Development Officer Bertha Fuentes would assist her. The Immigration Department also would play an important role. With USG assistance, the GoB would "work our way through this"; Belize wanted to be removed from Tier 3.

GoB Opposes Guatemala Because of Lack of Progress in Border Dispute

14. (C) PM Musa then said that he had been misquoted in recent media reports: he never had said that Belize actively supported Venezuela's bid for a seat on the UNSC; he merely had said there was no way that the GoB could support Guatemala.

It would be "helpful with CARICOM" if Guatemala "showed good faith" in making progress toward resolution of the border dispute. In particular, progress was needed in relocation of the inhabitants of the Santa Rosa community. He appreciated the USG's financial contribution toward relocation, and hoped the U.S. would use its influence to move Guatemala forward.

15. (C) Amb. Dieter then noted that he had met on June 20 with the Director of the Office of the General Secretariat in the Adjacency Zone, Miguel Trinidad, who had been visiting Belize City. Trinidad had said that the OAS was having difficulty in identifying land in Guatemala to resettle the Santa Rosa inhabitants. One possible site had proven infeasible because of land title disputes. The OAS currently was considering three or four other parcels; however, the owners had inflated their asking prices. Amb. Dieter then observed to PM Musa that Belize and Guatemala both appeared to have confidence in Trinidad's objectivity and impartiality, and that he hoped the U.S. would be in a good position to lend support to its friends in seeking a resolution of the longstanding border dispute. The U.S. had been concerned by reports that the GoB had lobbied against Guatemala's candidacy for the UNSC;

Venezuela's candidacy was not in the interest of Latin America, other Western Hemisphere nations or the UN.

¶6. (C) PM Musa then reiterated that the GoB was "not lobbying in support of Venezuela", but rather had "made its position clear" that it could not support Guatemala without progress on the border issue and movement on Santa Rosa.

¶7. (C) Amb. Dieter then noted that the U.S. was not alone in opposing Venezuela's candidacy for the UNSC; most of the Europeans and many Asian countries shared our views. Interestingly, PM Musa then acknowledged that, viewed objectively, Guatemala's chances of winning probably were good. Courtenay said that Guatemalan Foreign Minister Briz seemed to have the mistaken impression that Belize actively had lobbied CARICOM to support Venezuela; this had not been the case. To his knowledge, none of the Caribbean countries had told Guatemala definitively which way they would vote: "we need to see good faith progress on the border issue" for Guatemala to "win support from the Caribbean."

¶8. (C) Amb. Dieter noted that Venezuela also had a longstanding border dispute with Guyana, another member of CARICOM. But the broader question was which country's membership on the UNSC would better serve the interests of Latin America and the nations of the Western Hemisphere. In light of the Venezuelan Government's recent provocative behavior and international profile, including its mistreatment of U.S. diplomatic personnel, the answer seemed clear.
DIETER